



Celtic Cross

February 2016

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YOU ARE INVITED

**to sojourn
with a collection of sinners
on paths
that may be new,
or challenging,
or familiar but forgotten,
which lead to
oases of greater insight,
deeper peace,
truer freedom,
or brighter joy.**



**You are invited
to make a pilgrimage of the spirit
with this Beloved Community
towards the cross,
to the life that lies beyond.**

**All you need is the desire to travel
from where you are
to where Christ wants to lead you
in these 40 days.**

**The path begins in dust and ash,
February 10.**

“Come, follow me,” Jesus said.

This journey matters.

Worship Matters

Sunday Mornings at First Presbyterian:

9:15: Sunday School 10:30: Worship 11:30: Fellowship Time

February 7 – Service for the Lord's Day
Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Wednesday, February 10, Ash Wednesday Service, 7:15 p.m. (Community Room)

Music for meditation begins at 7. See p. 3 for more details.

February 14 -- Service for the Lord's Day
Sacrament of Holy Baptism
Cherub Choir sings

February 21 – Service for the Lord's Day
Scout Sunday
Celtic Choir sings

February 28 – Service for the Lord's Day

Music Notes

We are preparing lots of beautiful music to warm your hearts through the cold month of February. On Communion Sunday, the Chancel Handbells will open the service with "Come, Christians, Join and Sing." Deb Voytko will offer piano arrangements of the contemporary, "Come Share the Lord," as well as traditional hymns "I Surrender All" and "Come, Ye Disconsolate." Randall Thompson's magnificent "Alleluia" will be sung by the Chancel Choir and the organ postlude will be the thundering rendition of the strong hymn, "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past."

Our Lenten season begins with the Ash Wednesday service on February 10th. Worship will open with the prelude "O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go" on the piano. Members of the Chancel Choir will offer "Kyrie Eleison" and Leanne Campbell, flute, will join Deb for "Bless The Lord, O My Soul."

The Chancel Choir will offer choral arrangements of "I Want Jesus to Walk with Me", "God So Loved the World," and "Be Not Afraid" to fill the month. The Cherubs perform "My God is With Me" on February 14th and the Celtic Singers will sing "Meditation for Lent" on February 21st. Other hymn tunes you'll recognize throughout the month include piano versions of the beloved "Jesus Loves Me," "Abide With Me," and "Beneath the Cross of Jesus." Featured on the organ will be the exciting "Fanfare" from the Victorian period, the Baroque "Largo" by Pergolesi, and Purcell's "Bell Postlude." Be listening for the descending C major scale in the pedals on that last one!

—Cindy, Jo Ann and Deb

Lent at First Presbyterian Church

Ash Wednesday Service: February 10, 7:15-8:00 p.m (music begins at 7).

During Lent, we prepare ourselves for Christ's death and resurrection. We begin the season on Ash Wednesday with a quiet time of reflection and worship in the Community Room. There will be music for meditation beginning at 7 and the service begins at 7:15. We will mark ourselves with ashes, the sign of our human weakness and mortality, and we will remember God's unfailing grace and mercy shown to us in Jesus Christ.

Wednesdays During Lent—Four Paths!

Evening Prayer at 6, Supper at 6:20 and 7:00-8:00 Lenten paths (babysitting available for children 1st grade and younger). Dinner is \$5/person, \$2/child, \$12/family maximum. Please sign up so we know how many people to expect for dinner and for each track.

Cosmic-Questions Path

How should Christians view other religions? Can God be at work in other religions? What do Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists believe? We will discuss Adam Hamilton's little book, Christianity and World Religions and the accompanying dvd in both large and small groups with leaders. Check out the sample book in the lobby and let us know if you want us to order one for you (helpful but not necessary for discussion).

Christ-Walk Path

Adopt a spiritual discipline of prayer-walking this Lent. Reflect with others on Jesus' foot-paths, and explore how to pray with not only your heart and mind, but also your feet and body. Using a variety of sources, join others in small group conversations.

Colorful-Family Path

Whether you're 3, 13, 33, or 83, join us every week as we form a close community of loving and caring members. Parents are encouraged to bring their children 2nd grade and up. This year we will talk about how all of our hands paint a beautiful picture that we call the church.

Closer-Walk-With-God Path

Take a 40-day journey of walking with God through contemplative prayer. Discover how to be centered in prayer and daily living. Based on the book by J. David Muyskens and group spiritual direction.

Souper Bowl of Caring, Sunday February 7

After the worship service, our Junior Seekers will be collecting donations on behalf of the national Souper Bowl of Caring, a national program started by a Presbyterian youth group. Every dollar will be used to help with hunger locally! Last year, 9900 groups collected nearly \$10 million!

Mark Your Calendars: Adult Mission Trip to Bayville, April 24-29

PDA sites are still in the process of being set up in South Carolina so we are going to return one more time to Bayville, N.J., where much work remains for those homeowners who have never been able to afford to rebuild. More information to follow. Questions? Contact Tom Zeigler.

Spiritual Formation Opportunities

Sunday Mornings

- **Forum Class (Community Room)**

February 7 and 14: Navigating Serious Illnesses and the Medical System

Tom Brokaw, nationally known news correspondent and author, was diagnosed with multiple myeloma. His daughter is an emergency room physician and founder of “Good Medicine,” a nonprofit dedicated to helping families navigate the medical system. Hear them discuss issues of dealing with serious illness and navigating the medical system in a video from this summer’s Chataqua Institution. Afterwards, there will be a time for feedback and reflection, led by our parish nurse, Dawn Skelly and Carter, along with other church members from the health and legal professions.

February 21: Questions We Should All Answer

Carter and a panel of folks will discuss matters that we should all discuss with our loved ones regarding our own intentions and values when it comes to serious illness and end of life issues.

February 28: Promoting Greater Health—Dr. Keith Harrison

Dr. Keith Harrison, a family practitioner and member of the board of the Greater Pottstown Health and Wellness Foundation will discuss recent trends locally and nationally to promote wellness and better health.

- **Thoughtful Christians (Mary Ann Yost Room)** Teachers: Debbie Remelius, Sharon Trevo and Rob Wade **Topic:** to be determined by the class.
- **Men’s Sunday Mornings (Pastors’ Conference Room).** Teachers: Gary James, Paul Leopard, Tim Peckham, and Carter. **Topic:** The Gospel of Luke
- **Coming Soon: A new Sunday morning gathering**
A new class will soon be forming in the Library for informal discussions centered on “The Wired Word.”

Weekday Opportunities

- **“Sisters of the Way” Bible Study:** 9:15-10:45 a.m. every Thursday. Teacher: Kerry
- **Praying the Scriptures Group (Lectio Divina):** Tuesday, February 2 and 16 at 7:30 p.m. Join Kerry and others for a quiet hour of praying the Scriptures.
- **Next Week’s Sermon:** Tuesday, Feb. 9 and 23 at 7:30 p.m. Teacher: Carter
- **Theology Reading Group:** Will not meet this month because of Lenten School. Check with Carter to find out the next meeting date and what the group is reading.

HENS Nursery School Registration Open for Church Members

Church members now have an opportunity to register for openings in the HENS Nursery School for 2, 3, and 4 year-olds for the 2016-7 school year. If you are interested, or have questions, contact the director Robyn Durban, at 610-326-3690.

Music and Recreation for Children

Children in grades 2-5 join Jeff an exciting time of games and fellowship as we grow a community of young friends and then make a joyful noise to the Lord together with Mrs. B. for 45 minutes. The Celtic Choir usually sings the third Sunday of the month. Meets every Wednesday, 4:30-5:45.

Confirmation Class

February 14, 5 p.m.: Discussion of the book, What Would Jesus Do (rescheduled from January)

February 21, 5 p.m.: When Jesus Is Lord of My Money

Junior Seekers, Grades 6-8

Sunday, February 7: Immediately Following Worship: Souper Bowl of Car-ing—and hoagie sale

We will stand at the doors following the worship service and collect money for the 2013 Souper Bowl offering as well as being downstairs distributing hoagies to those who ordered them.

Sunday, February 14, 3 to 5pm Valentine Day Celebration

We will make and deliver Valentines to church members who could use a smile.

Friday, February 19—20th 7pm—9am Overnight

We'll be staying the whole night at the church, playing games, praying, laughing, snacking and sleeping(?)

Advisor Contact info: Mike and Mindy Lipsky, Jeff and Sarah Pinard, Rosie and Sandro Roseo, Jeff Fox-Kline

Senior Seekers—Grades 9-12

Sunday, February 7 3—5pm Ice Skating

Whoosh, whirl. Triple lutzs and quadruple axles will be the order of the day when we go ice skating. Some of us may even try to skate backwards!

Sunday, February 28 6—8pm Hot Cocoa and guest speakers

The Seekers get the opportunity to have a conversation about volunteering and spending time in service of our neighbors. There's also going to be a lot of super cool hot chocolate options for you to drink!

Advisors Contact info: Donna & Gary Rhoadarmer, Gwen and Tim Allen, Don and Melinda Kisela, Phil and Kim Wheelles

Family Faith Formation

What can we do during Lent?

Tradition has us giving things up during Lent, a practice which emulates the self-sacrifice and self-denial that Jesus modeled when he was wandering in the wilderness those 40 days and 40 nights, and the way he resisted the temptation during that time. This is a great practice, which can be helpful for people's spiritual growth and discipline. For families with children though, giving things up for Lent can sometimes seem arbitrary and difficult to explain.

This Lent I encourage you to practice this subtraction by adding something to your lives. Find some family time together during the day and spend it in devotion together. Devotion time does not need to be a solemn moment, but can be any way in which you find your family growing towards God. Try starting with God sightings—What is one way you saw God in your day? And see how the conversation progresses. By adding this time together as a family you are giving up some of the distractions of the world. In this way you can make Lent special for your family.

Deacons' Bench—Blood Drive, Tues., Feb. 9, 3-7 p.m.

Do you ever feel like you want to help someone? Now you can, and they won't even know it was you! This is what giving blood is about. Our blood drive is February 9 from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Tell a friend or just come yourself. You can schedule an appointment online at www.giveapint.org. If you have any questions, contact our Parish Nurse, Dawn Skelly or the church office.

Living Free: A Reflection on Giving Online

When we gather at church for worship, part of our service is giving our offering to God. It is the point in the service when we are asked to worship God through our giving. We are asked to participate and give as we are able. We share this act of honoring God and sacrifice together. We experience the collective act of giving as a church family but giving is also very personal.

Sharon and I made a decision to fulfill our monetary promise to God by using the online giving option offered by our church. We find ourselves traveling a bit more than before which takes us away from some of our Sunday church services. Before we elected to give online, one of us could be seen scanning our checkbook register on Sunday morning to be sure what we needed to give that week to catch up. Then there were the occasional Sunday mornings when we would be ready to walk out the door but realized we hadn't written the check yet. For our lifestyle, online giving helped us to honor our promise by committing to a monthly contribution to the church. Both the call to pledge and online giving have helped us put our regular giving at the top of our monthly commitments.

We still want to be part of the collective act of giving our offering to the Lord in church so we fill out one of the "I give online" cards found in the pews, write our name and place it in the offering plate. We feel the same about our commitment to giving even though we have changed the way we do it.

—Kurt Holloway

Fellowship Opportunities

Prime Timers

28 Feb. (Sunday) 5:00 PM Pot Luck Dinner/ 6:00 PM. HYMN SING

With MAX & MEREDITH in Fellowship Hall (Snow Date 6 Mar.)

9 April (Saturday) Pot Luck Dinner in Fellowship Hall (Time TBA)

PA Philharmonic Orchestra Concert 7:30 PM at Pottstown High School Auditorium, "Symphonic Soundtracks" (Selections from popular films)

May T.B.D. "Fiddler On The Roof" Matinee at Steel River Theatre

Men's Breakfast—Saturday, February 20, 8 –9 a.m. at Grumpy's

Because of the Scouts' Pinewood Derby, we are doing something different this month: meeting at Grumpy's, the restaurant owned by First Presbyterian's Sheila and Gene Dugan. We have the restaurant to ourselves and Gene will have a buffet for us for \$7 each. No cooking or clean up—just good fellowship. We do need to know how many are coming so please let Carter know if you can join us this month.

Faithful Friends with Children—Saturday, Feb. 27 at 5 p.m.

Check with Jeff for the place and food details. Children welcome!

Faith and Nature

Join us for our annual Winter Walk in the Woods on **Sunday, February 21st**. This year we will walk the scenic Crusher Road/Spring Mount section of the Perkiomen Trail. This area of the trail is my personal favorite as it offers wonderful views of the Perkiomen River as it meanders through the quiet of the woods. Native birds, waterfowl, and wildlife are usually abundant.

We will meet at the Crusher Road Trailhead at 2:00pm. We will hike approximately 4 miles on this easy and flat trail, depending on weather and trail conditions. But please feel free to come and go as you please, it is very easy to make the hike shorter if necessary.

Please sign up on the bulletin board or contact me at: mdeegsl6@aol.com or by phone at: 484-524-8072.
—Mike Deegan

Cluster Outreach Center Report

- **The pantry needs** foods lower in salt, fat and sugar and are whole grain. Cereal, soup, stews, chili, crackers, gravy, jelly, coffee and tea are what they need this month. **Coats, hats, and gloves, are also needed.** Bring your donations to the mission basket in the lobby.
- 269 Holiday Boxes were distributed which exceeded the goal of 200. Holiday toy program 380 children received gifts.
- Graduation for the UP3 6th graduation was held 12/9. 9 graduated that day for a total of 44 graduates. 15 new participants have signed up for the 7th workshop starting February 17.
- 9 families were housed during December. 3 new landlords.
- The Cluster needs donations of new or slightly used twin and queen sheet sets. There is also a need for storage space for furniture for families being housed.

Session Digest

At its January 27 meeting, the Session:

- Shared joys and concerns.
- Elected Michelle Thompson Treasurer for 2016.
- Received the report from Treasurer Michelle Thompson regarding the 2015 Treasurer's Report which showed that the church was able to meet mission commitments and capital fund allocations and end the year with no deficit thanks to very generous giving in December. The Session approved the final mission and capital fund allocations.
- Received the recommendations of the Personnel Committee regarding staff salary and benefit increases. Approved the Personnel Committee's proposed changes to the terms of call of the co-pastors, which is subject to approval by the congregation at the annual meeting on Jan. 31.
- Approved the budget for 2016 which includes the recommendations of the Personnel Committee. The budget will be presented to the congregation at the congregational meeting.
- Agreed that allocated but unspent 2015 Porter Broward money (because the Parish Nurse position was not filled all 12 mos.) will be allocated to the Mission Committee to distribute.
- Approved "Looking Ahead for 2016," a statement of goals and focus points for ministry in 2016.
- Approved the baptism of Viviana Rose Agnese, child of God and daughter of Christy and Daniel Agnese, on February 14, 2016. Christy is the daughter of Deb and Dave Voytko and is scheduled to join First Presbyterian Church of Ithaca, N.Y.
- Discussed plans for rescheduling the Officers' Retreat
- Received reports from Stewardship, Administrative, Endowment, Spiritual Formation, Nominating, Worship, and Mission Committees, and the Deacons.
- Please keep in your prayers:
 - Hospitality: That we will continue to welcome strangers
 - Worship: For a meaningful Lenten season of worship
 - Administrative: Thanks for a new committee member and for the fruitful budget work
 - Spiritual Formation: Thanksgiving for our teachers and childcare volunteers and for
 - Endowment: For new committee members
 - Personnel: For peace and strength for our staff for Lent and Easter
 - Nominating: Thanksgiving for those who accepted the call to serve and for the committee
 - Mission: That our Lenten mission collection will be fruitful.
 - Stewardship: Thanksgiving for a giving congregation

Financial Highlights from 2015

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Budgeted Giving and Other Receipts in 2015: | \$573,590 |
| Actual Giving and Receipts: | 594,631 |
| Budgeted Expenses and Other Disbursements: | 592,138 |
| Actual Expenses and Other Disbursements: | 594,631 |
| Deficit/Surplus for 2015: | 0 |

A generous December enabled us to meet our budget and all mission and capital improvement allocations except for \$48 budgeted for the Capital Improvements Fund (out of \$37,712!).

Thanks be to God!

Church Family News

Please keep in your prayers the following members who have been ill, injured, or hospitalized lately: **Fern Huff, Linda Hale, Avery Rose-Craver, Daniel Stetler, Jim Bathurst, Nancy McDevitt and Vince Melchiorre.**

Serving in the Marines overseas: Lance Corporal Adam Joseph Seanor, BLT 216 DETA, Unit 14084, FPO EA 09510-4084 (US postage rates apply)

Counters Corner

Serving as Counters for the offering for February 1: Hank & Dee Phillips, Barbara and Bob Lisi, Barbara Winter Feb. 14, 21, 28: Tom Zeigler, Susan Moyer, Dave DeLong and Lois Glenn. Thank you to all those who count!

Dave Ramsey's

Financial *Peace*
UNIVERSITY

It was for our freedom that Christ set us free, so why do we continue to allow student loans, credit cards and car payments to enslave us?

Financial Peace University is a 9 week, biblically based video driven small group study that teaches families how to beat debt, build wealth and give like never before. During Financial Peace University, you will discover a world of freedom by using proven biblical principles to permanently break free of the bondage of debt.

Classes start Monday February 8 (the day right after the Super Bowl), 2016 at 7pm in the Community Room. The cost is \$109 per person or married couple attending, to cover the cost of materials and access to online resources in addition to as many "refresher" classes as you would like to attend. Scholarships are available. There will be Free Previews Sunday, Jan. 31 at 9:15 or Monday February 1 at 7pm—also in the Community Room. Childcare will be available as needed. For more details or to sign up, contact Peggy in our Church office, or Rob Wade by email: rwade@wadegold.com.

Inquirers Orientation Sessions for Prospective Members

Are you interested in joining First Presbyterian Church, or are you a visitor who would simply like to learn about the programs and ministries of this congregation? A new Inquirers orientation series, led by Carter and Kerry will soon be offered. If you are interested or simply have questions, contact Carter at clester@fpcpottstown.org so you can be put on the list and consulted when mutually convenient dates and times are chosen.

Lectionary Readings for February

February 1 to 7:

Exodus 34: 29-35, Psalm 99, I Corinthians 3: 12—4:2, Luke 9: 26-36

February 8 to 14:

Deut. 26: 1-11, Psalm 91: 1-2, Romans 10: 8-13, Luke 4: 1-13

February 15 to 21:

Genesis 15: 1-12, Psalm 27, Phil. 3: 17—4:1, Luke 15: 33-35

February 22 to 28:

Isaiah 55: 1-9, Psalm 63: 1-8, I Corinthians 10: 1-13, Luke 13: 1-9

Laura Hazeltine's (i.e. Librarian's Assistant) Recommendations

I like to read a wide variety of subjects and genres. Last year I was looking for something completely different. The first book was a recommendation from the African Keeper at the Philadelphia Penn Museum, without that I would not have known about it at all. The second book I came across when researching books about diversity for the library.

Rabid: A Cultural History of the World's Most Diabolical Virus ~ Bill Wasik and Monica Murphy

Trust me, this is a fantastic book! It may seem strange to read a book about rabies but it is much more than that. If you want to learn something new or read something totally different, like I wanted to, **Rabid** is that book. The authors (a journalist and a veterinarian) have researched the topic thoroughly providing many illuminating facts and stories, for example, about how the word rabies actually came about, connections to Greek myths and literary classics such as Dracula and Frankenstein, and its influence on the human psyche for millennia. You will be shocked on how the disease affects animals and humans and how it kills nearly all victims once it affects the brain. It does not feel like a medical textbook at all, it is a well-written novel filled with suspense, horror, surprises, and even positivity at the end. Next time you are looking for a book, pick this enlightening and thrilling story. **Rabid** will not disappoint.

Jim Thorpe: Original All-American ~ Joseph Bruchac

This is the man the town in Pennsylvania is named after. Jim Thorpe is considered widely as one of the greatest athletes of the 20th century. He was a Sac and Fox Native American with European ancestry who was from Oklahoma. As a versatile athlete he played basketball, baseball, and football as well as the pentathlon and decathlon in the Olympics. This biography feels more like an autobiography with the author choosing to tell the story through Thorpe's eyes. This is a fascinating book for both history buffs and sports fans. The author gives many stories that explain why the current NFL policies are in place as well as stories about what reservation schools were like and how students were treated. Again if you are looking for something different, this is a book that will not disappoint. It is surprising and enlightening, which gives glimpses into what reservation schools were like, creation of modern football, how American Indians were treated, and much more. I am not a huge sports fan, except for the Olympics and the World Cup, this book intrigued me and I recommend it to everyone.

February 2016

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

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|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 Yoga 11:30 am Lectio 7:30 pm | 3 Yoga 11:30 am M/R 4:30 Relay 5:45 Evening Prayer 7:15 pm Committees 7:30 pm | 4 Sisters of the Way 9:15 am Cluster Delegate Lunch 12:15 pm Meal 5 pm Bells 6:30 pm Choir 7:30 pm | 5 | 6 |
| 7 Sunday School 9:15 Worship 10:30 Communion Sr. Seekers Ice Skating 3-5 | 8 Financial Peace University 7 p.m. Cub Scouts 7 | 9 Yoga 11:30 am Bloodmobile 3-7 pm Paint w/a Twist Next Week's Sermon 7:30 | 10 Yoga 11:30 am M/R 4:30 Ash Wednesday Worship 7:15 pm Deacon's 8 pm | 11 Sisters of the Way 9:15 Yoga 11 am Meal 5 Bells 6:30 Choir 7:30 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 Sunday School 9:15 Worship 10:30 Baptism Cherubs Sing Jr. Seekers deliver Valentines 3-5 Confirmation 5 | 15 Financial Peace 7 p.m. Cub Scouts 7 | 16 Yoga 11:30 am Relay 6 pm Shawl 7:00 Lectio 7:30 | 17 Yoga 11:30 am M/R 4:30 Lent Prayer 6 Supper 6:20 Lent Paths 7 Session 8:00 p.m. | 18 Sisters of the Way 9:15 Yoga 11 am Meal 5 Bells 6:30 Choir 7:30 | 19 Cubs Pine Wood Derby Set up 6 pm Junior Seekers Overnite 8 p.m. | 20 Men's Breakfast 8 a.m. At Grumpy's Pine Wood Derby 8 am |
| 21 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Celtic Choir Scout Sunday Winter Walk in the Woods 2 pm Conf. 5 pm | 22 Fin. Peace 7 Cub Scouts 7 | 23 Yoga 11:30 am Next Week's Sermon 7:30 | 24 Yoga 11:30 am M/R 4:30 Lenten Paths 6:00 Prayer 6:20 Dinner 7:00 program 7:30 Comp. Friends | 25 Sisters of the Way 9:15 Yoga 11 am Meal 5 Bells 6:30 Choir 7:30 | 26 | 27 Faithful Friends with Children 5 p.m. |
| 28 9:15 Sun. Sch. 10:30 Worship Prime Timers Pot Luck 5 pm Hymn Sing 6 p.m. Sr. Seekers 6 | 29 Fin. Peace 7 Cubs 7 p.m. | | | | | |

